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ABSTRACT

As one of the units on Native Americans developed by public school teachers enrolled in a University of Minnesota extension course on American Indian education, this unit for adolescent white children has as its central theme the Indians' relationship tc nature as related through their songs, legends, and Indian-related written selections. Included in the unit are objectives; names and sources of Indian legends, songs, and poetry with relevant discussion topics and questions; a subunit on the novel "When Legends Die;" evaluation tips; and a bibliography. (MJB)

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THE INDIAN'S IDENTIFICATION WITH THE EARTH: A NATIVE AMERICAN CURRICULUM UNIT FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL NATAM XVI

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A Note on the First NATAM Curriculum Series

During the Spring of 1970, a special University of Minnesota course in Indian education was offered through the College of Education and the General Extension Division to public school teachers in the school system of Columbia Heights, a Minneapolis suburb. This course--which was taught in Columbia Heights--was arranged and specially designed as a result of a request from Columbia Heights school officials and teachers to Mr. Gene Eckstein, Director of Indian Upward Bound. (Indian Upward Bound is a special Indian education program funded by the U.S. Office of Education, the University of Minnesota, and the Minneapolis Public Schools. It operates at two inner-city Minneapolis junior high schools, and functions under the control of an all-Indian board of directors.) In addition to the usual on-campus course requirements, such as reading, enrollees were given special lectures by invited Indians in addition to the person responsible for accreditation, Dr. Arthur Harkins. Lecturers were compensated for their contributions by a special fee paid by the course enrollees. A complete listing of the lecture sessions follows:

April 1, 1970 — Mr. Charles Buckanaga (Chippewa) "Indian Americans and United States History" Mr. Buckanaga presented a brief resume of the relationship of the American Indian and the in-coming European Cultures. He also discussed a three-dimensional view of historical data, emphasizing the development of gradual feelings toward and the eventual end result of the native Americans.

April 8, 1970 — Mr. Roger Buffalohead (Ponca) "Urban Indian" Mr. Buffalohead discussed the conflicts and problems confronting the Indian in the migration to the Urban setting.

April 15, 1970 — Lecture on Urban Indians
Dr. Arthur Harkins - University of Minnesota

April 15, 1970	Gene Eckstein (Chippewa) "Cultural Conflict and Change." Mr. Eckstein discussed the changing cultures of the Indian American and the problems encountered.
April 22, 1970	G. William Craig (Mohawk) "Treaties and Reservations." Treaties by the United States and American Indian Nations. The out growth of reservations and their influences on the American Indian.
April 29, 1970	Lecture H Ed. III Dr. Arthur Harkins
May 6, 1970	Gene Eckstein (Chippewa) The psychological and sociological challenges of the Indian American citizen in the transition from the Indian reservation to an urban area.
May 13, 1970	Lecture H Ed. III Dr. Arthur Harkins
May 20, 1970	Mr. Will Antell (Chippewa) "Indian Educational Conflicts" Director of Indian Education in Minnesota, Mr. Antell presented the challenges of the teacher in Indian Education, together with their relationship to the Indian student, Indian family and Indian community.
May 29, 1970	Lecture H Ed. III Dr. Arthur Harkins Comments from the class - final examination.

As a course requirement, each teacher taking the course for credit authored a curriculum unit for the grade level or subject area which he or she was actively teaching. The best of these units - a total of nineteen - were selected, and the over-all quality was judged to be good enough to warrant wider distribution. It was felt that the units were a good example of what professional teachers can do--after minimal preparation, that the units filled an immediate need for the enrolled teachers for curriculum material about Indian Americans, and that they served as an opportunity to test a staff development model. The units were endorsed by a special motion of the Indian Upward Bound Board of Directors.

From Indian Upward Bound Board metting--Thursday, January 7, 1971.

Certain people are asking that the curriculum guide of the NATAM series by taken from school teachings. There was discussion on this and it was suggested instead of criticizing the writing make suggestions on how to better them. Gert Buckanaga made a motion that we support the experimental curriculum guides. Seconded by Winifred Jourdain. Motion carried.

To accomplish distribution, the units were typed on stencils, mimeographed, assembled and covered. Costs were shared by the University's Training Center for Community Programs and the Training of Teacher Trainers Program of the College of Education. The units were then distributed throughout the state by shop stewards of the Minnesota Federation of Teachers, an AFT affiliate. The entirety of these distribution costs were borne by MFT.

A new NATAM series is currently being prepared. It will focus upon contemporary reservation and migrated Native Americans.

The Coordinators
May, 1971

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Preliminary Statement

Nature can be a springboard for man's thinking about himself and his relationship to the world around him. Man can see in the changing seasons the pattern of life and death. He can find peace and joy in his awareness of the persistence of life and growth. He can also achieve a sense of reconcilement for his own existence as he sees himself as a part of nature.

Perhaps nowhere in American literature have these concepts been more beautifully expressed than in the literary tradition of the American Indian, his songs and legends. The tradition, however, has been essentially an oral one, and, therefore, has not been shared with other cultures, notably the dominant white group. White children (as well as Indian, unfortunately) grow up without having known the literature of their Indian brother.

It is the purpose of this unit, therefore, to acquaint the adolescent white student with the literary tradition of the American Indian, centering around the concept of the Indian's relationship to nature. Also included will be selections which, though not written by Indians, clearly reflect the Indian culture.

Since Indian literature is an integral part of the American literary tradition, and has for too long been ignored, the student should be awakened to the cultural influences and contributions of the American Indian as reflected in his writing and that written about him.

Introduction

Unit: The Indian's Identification with the Earth

This unit will be a part of a larger unit with the controlling theme, Man and His Relationship to Nature. The unit will be taught primarily to white students, ages 16-18 years, in a suburban school system as part of a course titled the Survey of American Literature.

Length of Unit: Four weeks.

Kinds of materials used: Essays, legends, songs, poems and a novel.

Objectives:

A. Literary

To develop an understanding of literature by and about Indians as an integral part of the American literary tradition.

To develop an understanding of the oral tradition of much of Indian literature as reflected by their songs, poetry and legends.

To develop a sensitivity to the beauty of expression in much of this literature.

To develop an appreciation for lyric poetry as it is reflected in the Indian songs and poems.

To develop an understanding of Indian values by examining contemporary literature.

B. Sociological

To develop the understanding that Indians are neither without a culture nor culturally deprived by examining the rich tradition of the Indian as seen in his response to nature reflected in the literature.

To perceive a strong correlation between the Indian's life style, his active part in the creative processes of the earth, and his oral and written expression.

C. Psychological

To understand the thoughts of the Indian as they reflect the predominance of particular literary themes such as the concept of Mother Earth and man's integral relationship to the forces of nature.

D. Philosophical

To examine the recurrent theme of nature developed in the literature which illustrates the Indian's psychological and sociological make-up through reading and discussion of philosophically-oriented poems, legends, essays, and novels.

To develop an understanding of the traditional Indian attitude toward the earth only recently embraced by the non-Indian.

E. Skill

To determine individual student's knowledge and perception of American Indian traditions as reflected through literature by discussion and composition.

F. Behavioral

To develop empathic attitudes toward the Indian's concept of nature.

Essay

"The old chiefs are gone; the young men are to be found in school rather than in woods, but the lesson is clear. It is not just the Indian who has to learn from us; there is much to be learned from him-the values inherent in group identity, and his respect for nature."[1]

Since the study of traditions must be used as a tool for increased understanding, this unit will begin with an examination of several non-fiction selections which emphasize the theme of the Indian's relationship to the earth. These selections will not only introduce the theme of the unit, but will also illustrate the relevance to twentieth century society, as well as to the historical past.

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[1] Estelle Fuchs, "Time to Redeem an Old Promise." Saturday Review, (January 24, 1970), 75.

"Two Views of Nature: White and Indian," an essay by Frank Waters, from The American Indian Speaks.

1. Frank Waters says that the meaning of the Hopi myth is clear. Explain it in your own terms.

2. How does the myth help to explain the Hopi's relationship to the land? What is that relationship?

3. How is this relationship different from the Euro-American view of nature?

4. Waters says that neither view can be "exclusively right." Do you agree? What does he see as an alternative?

5. Imagine how the American landscape would look today if the white settlers had accepted the Indian view of nature. Write a theme describing it.

The New Indians by Stán Steiner - Portions of this book will be studied as non-fiction examples of the Indian's attitude toward nature. Specifically, portions of Chapter 12, "Go In Beauty" and Chapter 13 "As Long As the Grass Shall Grow" will be used. The following questions will serve as a guide in discussing these portions:

1. Notice the explanation of what "love of life" means: cherishing every living thing, worshipping everything and every being and sharing these things.

2. Further notice that man's love of life is the center of the Indian world, and the harmony of man with his spiritual and physical world is the circle that enlarges this belief. This harmony comes from nature; it comes from beauty.

3. How does the attitude of the Indian being culturally deprived seem refuted in this chapter? Explain this fully. Pay particular attention to the word culture.

4. Discuss the Indian attitude toward land, its function and their treatment of it.

5. Explain the statement, "tribes are not vestiges of the past, but laboratories of the future," in terms of any Indian's world view.

6. Note the comment, "The new Indian is a religious man. His religion is still rooted in beliefs in the life of the land, the Mother Earth. It is less overt, more internal, but it persists within his emotions." Explain how this attitude helps to explain the growing tribal nationalism of the Indian.

Indian Legends

One way to gain insight into the Indian's relationship with Nature is to study his legends and myths. Those selected for this unit reflect the Indian's understanding of the harmony that should exist between man and the universe. This harmony was present when the Indian was created and he has tried to maintain it through the ages. It is based on his belief that Nature sustains him both physically and spiritually. One hundred years ago, Chief Standing Bear of the Sioux stated, "The white man does not understand America. He is too far removed from its formative processes. The roots of the tree of his life have not yet grasped the rock and soil...But in the Indian the spirit of the land is still vested. It will be until other men are able to divine and meet its rhythm."

The following legends and myths illustrate the Indian's understanding of his role in Nature's rhythm and plan.

(HOPI)

"The Story of Creation Tokpela: The First World" from The Book of the Hopi by Frank Waters.

1. How does the Creator, Taiowa, indicate that human life is to form a natural and harmonious part of his universe?

2. According to Hopi myth, what is the primary function of man's vocal organs?

3. How did the humans early learn earth was a living entity like themselves? Why was she called both Mother and the Corn Mother?

4. How are the living body of man and the living body of the earth similar in construction?

Discussion: The closeness of the new child to the Corn Mother and the various ceremonies linking him to Nature. The Indian's awareness that although he has human parents, his real parents are the universal entities, Mother Earth and Father Sun.

(HIDATSA)

"Searching for Spiritual Guides" from Cry of the Thunderbird

1. What was the reason for finding a spiritual guide when an Indian reached manhood?

2. Why was the spirit of the Old-Woman-Who-Never-Dies one of the more powerful gods?

3. How do the gods communicate with man?

Discussion: The Indian concept of all living things having souls or spirits which are really gods.

(OJIBWAY)

"Gods of the Ojibways" from Cry of the Thunderbird

1. What natural sites were favored by the gods as dwelling places?

2. According to this legend,how are storms caused?

3. Where can the voices of the gods be heard in Nature?

Discussion: The idea of all of Nature being inhabited by spirits.

(HOPI)

"Good Weather and Water Supply" from Cry of the Thunderbird.

1. What is the significance of the prayer stick planted in the spring?

2. After a good rain how does the Hopi show his thanks?

   Discussion: The Indian's attitude toward material things.

(PUEBLO)

"Deer Hunting Ritual" from Cry of the Thunderbird.

1. What is the significance of the ceremony the evening before the hunt? Of the stone animals?

2. How does the action of putting pollen on the dead deer's mouth point out the Indian's relationship with Nature?

3. Note the Indian's gift of the deer's blood to Mother Earth and the spleen to the crow.

   Discussion: The Indian's harmonious relationship with Nature.

(HOPI)

"The Corn Mother" from The Book of the Hopi.

1. According to the Hopis, where did corn first come from? What significance does this have?

2. How did the Creator test His people with corn?

3. Why do the Hopi Indians venerate corn?

   Discussion: The ceremonial importance of corn.

(PAWNEE)

"The Corn Spirit" from American Indian Prose and Poetry by Margot Astrov

1. How much significance does the Skidi Pawnee place upon a dream? How do you know?

2. How did the Creator test his people with corn?

3. What do the phrases, "sacred bundle" and "sacred ear of corn" show you about the Pawnee's attitude toward Nature?

4. Why do you think Nature is personified in maternal images? (Mother Earth, Mother Corn, Mother Moon, Mother Evening Star)

Discussion: The Indian concept of time ("I do not want you to marry for two seasons") and ecological values ("Never drop a kernel upon the ground, for Mother-Corn will curse you...").

Indian Songs

Generally, the Indian songs fall into five categories, all centering around the mysteries of life and death: songs of healing (sickness was viewed as a partial death), songs of growth and germination, songs of vision and of dream, brave songs or songs of death, and individual songs born out of a moment of lonely suffering.

The songs of growth and germination reveal most conspicuously the Indian's integral relationship to the forces of nature and the universe. The Indian views himself as part of a creative divinity living in all things germinating and unfolding. Thus the Indian experiences himself as an active part of the creative processes of the earth.

(OSAGE)

"The Song of the Maize" from American Indian Prose and Poetry.

Discussion can be centered around the following questions:

1. Who is speaking in the song? What does he witness?

2. How is the presence of a divine power made evident in the song? What conclusion can you draw about the Indian's religion from this song?

3. This song can be analyzed from an aesthetic point of view; that is, the lyrical quality, the incantatory effect of the rhythm, and the parallel phrasing.

These concepts can be pointed out as the distinguishing characteristics of Indian song.

(PIMA)

"Rain Song" from American Indian Prose and Poetry.

This song can be used to illustrate the functional purpcse of the song; that is, to bring a change in Nature (rain), to strengthen a failing power of a supernatural being (the rain spirit), and to maintain and prolong individual life (water means life, especially for those who live in semi-arid regions).

It should be pointed out to the students that the song of the American Indian exists not as a pure art form, but as it always serves an end. The songs can best be understood, then, in their functional setting, for example, as part of a ceremony.

(TEWA)

"Song of the Sky Loom" from American Indian Prose and Poetry.

The sky loom refers to the small desert rain characteristic of this part of the country. This song, like the others, is not simply self-expression. Song, for the Indian, was a magic which called upon the powers of Nature and constrained them to man's will.

Students should note the references in lines 1-3 to the Indians as children of Mother Earth and Father Sky.

1. In line 3, why do the Indians bring gifts?

2. Was this traditional?

3. What would such a gesture symbolize?

   Note: the Sioux tradition of throwing the first piece of meat into the fire would parallel to bringing gifts in this Tewa song. The idea is to always return to Nature what one takes as a gesture of gratitude.

4. Why do the Tewa ask to "walk fittingly" where birds sing and grass is green?

5. How does this request reveal their attitude toward Nature?

6. Attention can be given to the reverential tone and the pattern of balance (lines 5-8) in this song and how these poetic elements relate to theme; that is, respect for Nature and balance in Nature.

Another interesting comparison could be drawn between this song and another early American poem, Edward Taylor's "Huswifery." In the latter, Taylor outlines the process of cloth making from the spinning to the wearing of the garment, asking God to be his craftsman so that he might put on "holy robes for glory." In the song the Tewa ask of Mother Earth and Father Sky a "Garment of brightness" that they "may walk fittingly."

1. Is the request essentially the same?

2. How is it different?

3. Do you like one approach better than the other? Why?

(KWAKIUTL)

"Prayer to the Young Cedar" from American Indian Prose and Poetry.

This song is a prayer used by those who peel bark of young and old cedar trees.

1. Why do you think the woman asks permission of the tree to take its bark? Why does she address it as "friend?"

2. How can the tree keep away sickness and death?

Relate this poem to the animistic view of Nature; that is, that all natural objects in the universe possess a soul as well as physical form. Therefore, although the Indian takes and uses the physical form of an entity called upon to manifest its benign powers. Traditionally, Indians did this whenever they took from Nature as noted in the Tewa song. Students can be told of some of the Sioux customs. For example:

Before a deer or any other animal was killed, a prayer was recited and an apology saying in effect, "I'm sorry I must kill you but I do so 'that my people might live.'" Eagles were needed for down and feathers. But before they were killed, the eagle head was washed to signify adoption into the tribe. Then the eagle was killed, bloodlessly, by suffocation. The stripped body was then carried, in ceremony, to be buried in the eagle burying ground.

(HOPI)

"Song of Creation" from The Book of the Hopi.

1. What are the three phases of creation? How do these indicate the Creator's plan of life?

2. For what reason is this song sung by the Indians?

3. Why was song created in the first place?

4. Who are the Butterfly Maidens?

Note: Communication with the Creator through Nature. Note emphasis on joy and praise.

Modern Indian Poetry

Modern Indian poetry has only recently come to the forefront. Poets such as Norman Russell, Simon Ortiz, Emerson Blackhorse Mitchell and James Welch are essentially novices of poetic expression. Russell and Ortiz, for example, have had no success at publication to date. Mitchell, a college student, has published one book in collaboration with his writing instructor. The most promising of the young Indian poets, according to John R. Milton, editor of The American Indian Speaks, is James Welch. Welch is a Blackfoot Indian who has published in such magazines as Poetry, Poetry Northwest, and New American Review. He was recently anthologized in The Young American Poets.

Welch has been selected as the representative poet in this section on modern poetry because of his promise as a professional poet and also because it is felt that he typifies the style and content of modern Indian poetry.

A recurring theme found in modern Indian poetry focuses upon the concept of alienation; or, more specifically, a loss of direction, a sense of being torn between two cultures. The conflict seems to be rooted in the contrasting ideologies of urban life and the older Indian life style based upon the land. The young Indian, growing up, living on the reservation, is caught between these two cultures. The old ways, while they may be beautiful, are not often conducive to survival. Life on the reservation is often portrayed, therefore, in bleak, sterile images. On the other hand, the white man's culture as typified by the urban setting is alien to the Indian, as illustrated by Donna Whitewing's description of Omaha: "Sinister Trucks prowl down dim-lit alleyways. Racing past each other, cars toot obscenities." Thus the urban Indian may find himself to be only "a portion of some murky design" rather than creative and integral part of the universe.

(BLACKFOOT)

"Snow Country Weavers" by James Welch from Young American Poets.

1. To whom is the poet speaking?

2. What news does he want conveyed to his friends?

3. What is the meaning of the message?

4. How is the concept of Nature (birds, wolves, spiders, the wind) operative in the poem?

"Surviving" by James Welch from Young American Poets.

1. What is the setting of the poem? What images does the poet use to create the setting? What mood do these images create?

2. In stanza two, lines 3 and 7 are interspersed among Blackbird's comments. What meaning do they have? How do eagles soaring and sparrows skittering provide a dramatic contrast to what Blackbird says? Are these Blackbird's thoughts or the speaker's?

"Winter Indian" by James Welch from Young American Poets.

1. The central image in the poem is winter. What meanings do we associate with this season? For example, is this a time of growth, life, and productivity? What, then, is the poet telling us about life on the reservation through his use of winter images? Why does he say that "winter comes earlier each year?"

2. To what position has the Chief been relegated? Why?

3. What escape does the Indian appear to have from the bleakness of a "winter" life?

4. What do you think the "specks of red" are in the final line?

"Christmas Comes to Moccasin Flat" by James Welch from Young American Poets.

1. What details are used to convey a picture of Christmas on the reservation? What total picture do these images create?

2. How is Nature a part of this picture? (the wind, snow, elk)

3. How does the story that the medicine woman tells the children contrast to the setting in which she tells it?

"Wolf Song, The Rain" by James Welch from Young American Poets.

1. This poem points out the importance of song and ceremony to the Indians, in this case, the rain dance ceremony. In stanza one, how does Welch contrast the situation of the starving Indian to the three day ceremony?

2. What is the land without ceremony, according to Welch?

3. How has the land changed since the white man took it over?

4. In what way can "animals...counsel man"?

(PAPAGO)

"Direction" by Alonzo Lopez from The American Indian Speaks.

1. How is the animistic view of Nature revealed in this poem?

2. Why do you think the poet associates the Sky with innocence?

3. How does the use of parallel phrasing give direction to the poem?

"I am Crying from Thirst" by Alonzo Lopez from The American Indian Speaks.

1. Discuss this poem in relation to the older rain songs noting differences in language, style, and thematic content.

2. Does this poem have a dual meaning? What meanings could "thirst" have?

(NAVAJO)

"The New Direction" by Emerson Blackhorse Mitchell from The American Indian Speaks.

1. Discuss the images the poet uses to convey his feelings about the old Indian way of life. What does he reveal about his feelings through these images?

2. What role does the wind play? Compare this to the wind's role in the Osage myth of creation.

3. Why do you think the poet termed the old way the "Long Walk"?

4. Which direction does the poet decide to take? How does he feel about his decision? Why do you think he feels this way?

(NEZ PERCE)

"Poetress" by Phil George from The American Indian Speaks.

1. The poet speaks of "Nature's lessons of life." What lessons do you think Nature could teach us if we listened?

2. Could these lessons bring "real happiness and peace" as the poet suggests? If so, how?

3. The poet also speaks of "Earth's language." What do you think that is?

Novel

When Legends Die by Hal Borland

Each student who sits in our classroom must face life in a world that is at once growing and shrinking, a world filled at the same time with the promise of wondrous achievement and with the threat of utter devastation, if not extinction. Science has pushed the boundaries of his physical world for beyond what were thought to be its limits, and the explosion of knowledge in many disciplines has vastly increased the scope of his mental domain. The same scientific and technological advances that have expanded his world have also, in a sense, reduced its size. They have brought the far reaches of the universe to his living room, and they have made whatever is done by people or to people anywhere on our earth or in and even beyond its atmosphere immediately important to him. And what will ultimately happen to these people and to him depends in great measure on the quality of human understanding and human wisdom and human character that is brought to bear in the use of this awesome mass of human knowledge. The student must come to recognize the common humanity of all the people who share his physical world, and he must come to understand them and himself in terms of this common humanity.

But how is he to acquire this understanding of human character and human experience? Despite the ease of travel, he is not likely to have any but casual personal contact with people outside his own community. And the nature of the community itself circumscribes his life, restricting his associations with people outside his own small group and even lessening his opportunities for deep human relationships within it. He must find other ways to enlarge his experience and deepen his understanding of both the diversity and the universality of human beings, of their problems and their ways of life.

Neither cerebral grasp of facts nor electronic participation in events as they happen is to be minimized; yet neither can be equated with real understanding of the common humanity in men or the nature of the human experience. Knowledge is not wisdom; sight is not insight; immersion is not

interpretation; participation is not perspective.

We must insure, then, that the student is enabled to seek elsewhere for the real essence of human character and human experience. We must help him to go beyond the way of the mind and the way of the senses to the way of the spirit, to progress from intellectual apprehension of fact and immersion in events as they occur to truth that transcends both factual knowledge and the chaos of raw experience: the truth to be found in literature. Literature makes life stand still long enough to be examined; it unscrambles, selects, orders, distills human experience. The perceptive reader of literature achieves a sharpening of his sensitivity toward the world around him, toward his heritage from the past and toward his fellow human beings.

Objectives - for When Legends Die

The student should arrive at certain concepts:

That a part of each individual's life experience is his quest for both personal identity and social ties.

That different societies and cultures have different sets of principles, or value systems, each as sincere as another.

That the novel as a literary form is well suited to the realistic portrayal of cultural differences and their effect on the individuals and societies concerned.

That any language which expresses and communicates the ideas and feelings of its speakers is a good language.

That word choices reveal attitudes and produce often predictable semantic reactions.

That interpretation of literature must be supported by textual evidence.

The student should develop certain abilities:

Ability to recognize and understand some literary techniques and the author's skill in using them.

Ability to react critically to what he reads or hears.

Ability to recognize the importance of considering the point of view of characters in a novel, of the novelist, of a speaker in evaluating what they say.

The student should develop certain attitudes:

Interest in other cultures.

Willingness to understand people who live in other cultures and by other principles than his own.

Awareness of cultural barriers to communication.

Willingness to withhold judgment until the evidence is in, and to alter judgment in the light of new evidence.

Sensitivity to language; appreciation of its relationship to culture; recognition that no language is intrinsically superior to another; awareness of the phenomenon of semantic reaction as a characteristic of human behavior.

Interest in literature as source of pleasure and as an avenue to understanding of human life.

Recognition that his own needs for a sense of personal individuality and also for a sense of belonging to a social group are common to all human beings; that he, like others, must seek a workable accommodation between the two.

General Procedures - for teaching When Legends Die

After introdicing the novel, when interest has been stimulated and motivation established, students should make a quick preparatory examination of the novel.

In order to make practical assignments for reading and discussion, the book will need to be divided into segments, and specific purposes will need to be defined for students' guidance in reading each segment. The novel falls logically into four sections, the first dealing with events up to the time Tom goes to school (Chapters 1-12), the next with his life in school (13-21), the next with his life in the rodeo (22-41), and the last with his return to his home and his final reconciliation with nature (42-49).

When the entire novel has been read and discussed, there should be a speaking or written composition assignment as a culminating experience. Finally, the students' achievement should be evaluated in terms of the objectives for the unit and of what has been emphasized in the teaching.

Appreciation Skills

The ability to identify and interpret clues to character is basic to appreciation of literature. It is perhaps especially important in appreciating this novel because many characters in the story do not understand each other as individuals because of their own ethnocentrism, or cultural bias. Students therefore must be led to discover and analyze all the available evidence in forming their judgments. They will need to apply all the usual techniques; what the character himself says, thinks, and does; what the author says about him; what other characters say to and about him and how they behave toward him. They will also need to assess the reliability of others' speeches and actions as a basis for judgment about a particular character, keeping in mind the attitudes and motives behind what they say and do.

Full appreciation also depends upon the abiltiy to recognize and understand literary techniques and the author's skill in using them. One of the literary techniques with which students ought to be familiar is the simile, and this novel provides rich opportunities for arriving at an understanding of this device in circumstances where attention to it is integral to the literary experience rather than artificially structured. The approach should be inductive, with emphasis on the effectiveness of their comparisons because of the strong sensory impressions they evoke and because of their appropriateness to the characters and situation in that so many relate to the world of nature.

The teacher might read a few sentences aloud: "I do not want a house. I want a lodge that is round like the day and the sun and the path of the stars. I want a lodge that is like the good things that have no end." Then students should be asked to explain why this is effective. A portion of the class period should be spent scanning for additional examples of simile which they consider especially effective. They may compare these nature similes with some other kind -- those based on comparisons to people, perhaps, such as "shout like a sergeant" -- and explain why the author's choice was appropriate in revealing an attitude or aspect of culture.

This novel also provides excellent opportunities to introduce or reinforce the concept of symbolism. Again, the device should be dealt with as it is integral to the novel, with emphasis on students' appreciation of the effect Borland achieves by appropriate selection and sustained use of these symbols -- these things which for the perceptive reader have more than their literal meaning. Discussion of the rather obvious implications of winter snows and spring breezes would be a good way to alert students to watch for future uses of this device in the remainder of the novel. This will help prepare students to discuss the sustained symbolism of the seasons and the life-cycle of man and nature.

Procedure

The following activities can serve as both a review of the novel and as an inductive approach to important conclusions about language and its relation to culture.

Guide class discussion toward recognition of concepts about language by questions like the following:

What different languages are mentioned in the novel?

Why didn't all of the people in this novel speak the same language?

Who develops a language? Does one person?

Arrive at the realization that language is a group achievement.

What language did Tom learn first?

From whom did he learn it?

When did Tom learn this language?

How did he learn the language?

Arrive at the realization that language is learned from the group.

What did Tom think of the shcool when he arrived?

What problem did he have communicating?

What is ironic about the situation?

What did the agent think of the Indians' languages?

Is one language better than another? For whom?

Arrive at the realization that any language which expresses and communicates the ideas of its speakers is a good language. No language is inherently and objectively better than another, though the cultural bias of its speakers may make them consider it so. Conatct with another culture is often reflected in word borrowing.

Arrive at the realization that a language reflects its speakers' way of living and looking at the world about them. As one achieves greater objectivity in judgment he sheds his tendency to consider other cultures and languages automatically inferior to his own.

Literature

Chapters 13-21 should be considered closely because they clarify the situation up to this point in the novel. Here the conflicts caused by the transplantation of Tom from one setting and culture to another are pointed up. Here, too, differing attitudes toward him and the problems caused by his reactions to life in the strange situation are revealed.

To guide the discussion the teacher might ask such questions as:

What effects have the circumstances of Tom's life up to this point had on him?

How do his reactions to the school and the white dominated society affect others?

How do other people feel toward him?

How do they feel about the problems he causes?

How do they feel about the problems he faces?

How do they feel about the chances that he will adjust to his new environment?

How do you feel about his chances? Why?

By means of considering textual evidence, students should be led to see that:

Tom's attitude is defensive. He is clinging to his ways, but is being changed by his new contacts.

The agent and Neil Swanson are the least sympathetic to Tom.

They see him only as one more person to be assimilated into the white society.

Blue Elk exemplifies a person belonging to neither culture, playing both and losing. He has sold himself to the white man, but is not accepted by him.

Rowena Eilis is more objective. She realizes better than the others the complexity of the boy's problems. She recognizes that both whites and Indians share the evil in "The dark unfathomable heart of man," and tries to reason with Tom and is patient with him.

With constant emphasis on specific supporting evidence from the novel, students should be led to explore the different value systems of the two cultures and to assess them as objectively as possible in terms of human rather than racial standards: What things did each value? What qualities of character did each admire? What principles guided their conduct? Did all members of either group completely accept the values held by the majority of their group and completely reject the other value system? What traits did members of both cultural groups share as human beings? Which of these human traits contributed to the misunderstanding between the groups? (Among others, these should emerge: ethnocentric view that one's own culture is superior to another; failure to index (Indian 1 is not Indian 2; white man 1 is not white man 2)in order not to confuse a group label with an individual person; tendency to apply unfavorable epithets to another cultural group; tendency to believe what one wants to believe, what fits one's preconceived notions, what is said by those one trusts because they are members of one's own social group.) Did all members of either group misunderstand the other to the same degree? Why?

With this background students should be able to see that the problems depicted in the novel have real relevance for them as members of contemporary society.

Characteristics of structure and style should also emerge from discussion based on skillful questioning:

Convincing realism resulting from inclusion of authentic details. drawn from careful research

Irony

Use of omniscient method of narration, which allows the author to share with the reader the thoughts of the various characters.

Effectiveness of choice and portrayal of lesser characters in terms of the action and purpose of the narrative.

Effectiveness of choice of Tom as the central character.

Creating understanding and sympathy for two conflicting groups and their views. (On the basis of points brought out earlier, students should discuss these questions: Has the author, a white man, been able to shed his "white" point of view? Has he overstated the case

for the Indian? Is he fair to both sides? Though the whites and Indians in the story did not understand each other, do you as a reader think you understand why the Indians, the whites, and especially Tom acted as they did?

Written Composition

General Procedure:

Each student may choose one of three topics, take notes as directed, narrow the subject further, and after considering various possibilities settle on a generalization he wishes to support. When the teacher has approved this statement as a workable thesis or topic sentence suited to the length of the composition to be required, the student may proceed with the remaining steps in the composing process.

Assignment Topics

1. Influential Adults -- Bessie and Red Dillon
   Method of development: Pointing out differences within similarity.
2. Misguided Missionaries -- Blue Elk and Benny Grayback
   Method of development: Pointing out similarities within difference.
3. Conflicting Worlds -- Tom and Red Dillon
   Method of development: Pointing out cause-and-effect relationships.

The Essay Question: Suggestions For Using Composition Skills in a Test Situation

Students of all degrees of ability should have writing experiences that require them to organize and express their ideas under pressure. The following suggestions will serve as a guide in framing suitable questions

for evaluating students' understanding while at the same time requiring the application of the skills of written composition.

1. Discuss the effects of acculturation of Tom. Give specific examples of the changes in physical appearance and mental attitudes.

2. When Tom returned to Pagosa and the mountains, he wanted to completely destroy his past and his heritage by killing the grizzly. Yet when faced with the moment to kill, he could not. Why? Discuss what had caused the desire to kill the bear and the reasons which explain his failure to do so.

3. Near the end of the novel, Tom "searches for the skys, reaches back to beginnings. To the cub, to Blue Elk, to the school, to the quirting and the denial in the moonlight. That was where the hunt began, away back there. Not the actual bear hunt, but the hunt that led to the bear years later. That was when he began hunting down all of the painful things of the past, to kill them. And one by one, over the years, he did kill them. All except the bear. All except his childhood, his own heritage." This summarizes Tom's motivations and helps us develop our understanding of him. Discuss the quotation in terms of specific episodes in the novel.

4. Nature is cyclical; the novel is cyclical. Explain this statement in terms of the birth-life-death-rebirth theory of this novel.

The following are additional questions for entire class or group consideration. These are designed to lead to a full appreciation of the novel, When Legends Die:

A. What is the significance of the title of the novel?

B. How did the federal school fail to meet Tom's needs?

C. Two cultures often have divergent attitudes concerning the earth and its reason for existing. Explain how the two cultures represented in this novel regard nature and the conflict which results.

D. What are the opposing concepts of nature represented by Tom on the one hand and Red on the other?

E. How are the Material Dream and the Pastoral Dream reflected in this novel?

F. Investigate the relationships of other characters to Tom. How many foils has Borland provided to emphasize the strengths and weaknesses of his major character?

G. Compare Tom's attitude toward himself and his world at the end of the novel to his attitude at the beginning.

H. Discuss: This is a novel of discovery.

I. By the realistic speech and action, the characters are made sharply individual while still suggesting universal qualities. Explain how this is true.

J. When personal identity comes into conflict with social ties, what are the results?

K. Several passages in the novel refer to the "roundness of things" in nature and in human beings. Explain what is meant by this phrase and what thematic significance it has.

L. Discuss: "But plowing seemed stupid to him. (Tom) Why should anyone rip up the grass, even if it was sparse grass, and make the earth grow something else? If left to itself, the earth would grow grass and many other good things. When you plowed up the grass you were making the earth into something it did not want to be." How do you explain this in terms of Tom's attitude and other Indians like him? How do you feel about this statement? Why?

M. On page 77 of the text, Tom is working as a horse herder and has been riding the colts to tame them. Benny Grayback says Tom should not have done this, explaining that at the proper time the colts would be roped, chocked and water starved. If this is not successful, they will be beaten and chocked again until they have no fight in them. Upon hearing this, Tom thinks, "In the old days the people had respected their horses, tamed them. But the old days were gone. Now they broke the horses, broke their spirit." What similarity is there between the horses and the children at the federal schools?

N. How is Tom's change in life style reflected in his changed attitude toward taming horses in the third part of the novel and how does this altered attitude lead Tom back to his beginning?

O. The chief symbol in the novel is the bear. What does it represent and why?

P. What happens near the end of the novel to signify that nature cannot be destroyed wantonly by man without payment?

Q. The Greek tragedy typically has four movements relating to the tragic hero: glorification, pity, reconciliation, exultation. Illustrate the presence of these four movements in <u>When the Legends Die</u>.

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Evaluation

1. Evaluation will be conducted by means of weighing the effectiveness of discussion groups in understanding the central thesis of the unit.

2. Evaluation will come through students' examination of a short selection of Indian literature not studied as a class in order for teachers to evaluate the students' ability to recognize recurring themes.

3. Evaluation will involve students finding conflicting viewpoints concerning the American Indian in literature previously studied by such authors as Mark Twain and James F. Cooper.

4. Evaluation will include comparing the image of the American Indian and his literary tradition as seen in the literature studied in this unit to the view of the American Indian as seen on television, in the movies, the comics and in the pulp western.

5. Evaluation will include commentary on the comic strip Redeye in view of what we have studied in this unit.

6. Evaluation will include testing attitudinal change as a result of the unit of study. Students will be presented one or more quoted statements concerning the American Indian which reveal subtle prejudices. They will be asked to comment on the statements. Examples might include the following:

"Let's give new leadership to the Indian people and do what is right for the Indian people." Stewart Udall

"It is not easy for the Indians to conduct their own regimes, but the very difficulty makes it worthwhile for them to try."
Brophy and Aberle

"If a superintendent, or area director, did his job right, he probably would not be particularly popular with the Indian people. The Spirit of Sante Fe was the spirit of asking ourselves what our Indian peoples want." Commissioner of Indian Affairs

"Because the Indian lived a simple life, recognized no power except that of his own band, and reserved great freedom of action for himself, he enjoyed ideal freedom, was always happy, and therefore lived the most desirable life." Wissler

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